Fam-misc.

WILL THE CHURCH MEET THE TEST?

IF the church ever intends to vindicate its name among men as the champion of a pure and peaceable religion of heavenly power, now is the time when it must move forward with consecration surpassing all it has shown before. Now is the hour for sacrifice, for devotion that costs, for fidelities unflinching and unlimited. The reason why the knowledge of the Lord must cover the earth as the waters cover the sea is now evident as never before; nothing less than literal saturation with religion will save the world from such foul outbreaks of wicked ambition as now bathe it in blood. Thin-spread, nominal Christianity is a demonstrated failure. Nothing, therefore, but the uttermost insistency and persistency of Christians for the rights and will of their Master can be worthy of their calling and allegiance in this critical juncture of human fate.

Will the church meet the test? Its greatest immediate peril is that it will give way and lose ground before it fairly realizes that the test has come. In whatever new crusade the church is called to by this unequalled demand, the first order of its commander will not be a blood-stirring "Move on!" but a sobering "Hold fast!" If the earth is to be covered deep with the knowledge of the Lord, the matter to care for first is that the tide shall not be allowed to ebb away from the fields where it now prevails. The gospel flood to be hoped for must not fall before it rises. Recession anywhere now in any religious work would verge on treason.

Let us put the danger in the plainest of warning. War conditions have disturbed business all over the world. Hard times, of nobody knows what severity, are imminent in the United States. Many, possibly most families will likely have less to live on. The habit of Christian givers under the same conditions in other times has been to reduce their giving to the mission enterprises of the church. It has been assumed that a Christian may lawfully abridge his benevolence in the proportion that his income de-

creases. Perhaps that is a fair abstract principle. But let the church take notice that it does not apply now. A new measure is installed. A stress of burden must be shouldered by the church which it has never borne before. The stress begins with this: The church must this time keep up its mission giving unfalteringly, no matter how its temporal prosperity fails. If incomes go down, the utmost cut of economy must be applied to what Christians spend on themselves before they think of abating what they give to the cause of making this world what Christ wants.

How can there be hope of the church's marching forward, if straightway, when the teeth of hardship champ in its flesh, it slinks back? There is no going forward without hardship. There can be no going forward except there first be a great standing fast.

Don't cut down your missionary contribution. Don't risk it. Be on the safe side of your immortal duty; sacrifice and give a little more.—*The Continent.*

✠ ✠ A WORD TO THE ✠ ✠ CONGREGATIONAL PEOPLE FROM THE AMERICAN BOARD

The Officers and Prudential Committee of the American Board have faith that the Congregational people will meet the test. As a proof of that confidence, it has been decided to make no cut in the annual appropriations, but to sustain the work of our missionaries on the same basis as last year. To do otherwise would be to confess the unwillingness of the churches to rise to the great emergency which is upon us because of the European War. This is no time for American societies to fall away—certainly not for the parent society of them all. No, we must sustain the work and if possible go forward. Each one must do his part and give to the point of real sacrifice. We must see to it that our churches meet the test when the time comes for gifts to be made to the American Board; that we ourselves meet the test.

Send gifts to FRANK H. WIGGIN, *Treasurer;* order free leaflets from J. G. HOSMER, Congregational House, Boston, Massachusetts.